

November 5, 1968
**Report Relayed by Andropov to the CPSU Central
Committee, 'Students and the Events in
Czechoslovakia'**

Citation:

"Report Relayed by Andropov to the CPSU Central Committee, 'Students and the Events in Czechoslovakia'", November 5, 1968, Wilson Center Digital Archive, TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 60, D. 48, Ll. 120-153. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/115979>

Summary:

KGB Chairman Yuri Andropov presents a secret, 33-page report to the CPSU Central Committee about the mood of Soviet college students. The report had been completed sometime before the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, and had been circulating within the KGB. It is not clear precisely who drafted the report, but Andropov's cover memorandum and the report itself indicate that the author was a college student in Odessa who had recently finished his degree.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

THE COMMITTEE FOR STATE
SECURITY OF THE COUNCIL
OF MINISTERS OF THE USSR
5 November 1968
SECRET

A document has been received at the Committee for State Security in which a number of judgments are set forth about contemporary students and youth.

The author of the document is a college student who has been in the company of many young poets, artists, and performers, and who has taken part in the competitions of the "Club for the Happy and Quick-Witted" (GHQ). [The GHQ was a popular television program-M.K.]

Despite the immaturity of the author and his obvious subjectivism when analyzing certain matters, the document, in our view, merits close attention, since many of the propositions in it coincide with the views of our other sources.

Taking account of this information, the KGB is adopting measures to study negative processes and to prevent politically harmful developments among our youth that might arise from these processes.

Attachment: Document numbering 33 pages.

CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE FOR STATE SECURITY
[signed] Andropov

* * * * *

ATTACHMENT

The concept of a "student" in our country encompasses an extraordinarily large number of people. However, the present essay is intended to describe and analyze the behavior of full-time undergraduate students, who are potentially, by virtue of a number of factors, the most socially unstable and most easily swayed group in the population. These factors include the group's relative youthfulness, the daily contacts the members have with others like themselves, the members' lack of material obligations (for the most part) before their families, and so forth.

STUDENTS AND THE EVENTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Students' attitudes toward the ongoing situation in Czechoslovakia are of two main types. On the one hand, indignation is expressed toward the "brothers," whom we "have been subsidizing for so many years" and who are now responding with vile ingratitude. This group of students, among whom are participants in the Hungarian events, demand decisive measures and the use of military force. However, this group is small in number.

The rest of the students, who generally take pleasure in anything that causes problems for or conflicts with the official line, are watching the ongoing situation in Czechoslovakia with benevolent curiosity. They have no real sense of what all this can lead to. They are impressed by the Czech students, who have become a major social force. Some even contemplate (albeit hypothetically) the possibility of repeating the Czech experience in our own country. In a discussion with the author of this review, a third-year student said: "It's interesting to think whether such events

could take place here. I personally would take part if they did."

What has attracted especially great interest is the creation of opposition parties. The very word "opposition" is something students find appealing, and even the most thoughtful of them regard the creation of an opposition party as a solution to the paradox they have encountered: "The struggle for the Soviet regime is against the Soviet regime." Hence, they are following events in Czechoslovakia with great interest. The excesses cited in the Soviet press seem largely harmless to them, and the official commentaries seem too pointed.

The place where students are afraid of the situation that has unfolded is China....

The events in Poland, given their brief duration, did not attract special attention. From time to time, rumors circulate about anti-Semitic purges in Poland. The Russian segment of the students and the Ukrainians would welcome such developments.